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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 003352

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA AND PRM

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON IRAQIS IN JORDAN - AUGUST 8

REF: A. AMMAN 3208
[B](#). AMMAN 2964
[C](#). AMMAN 2640

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#). (SBU) SUMMARY: In the wake of the July 26 Refugee Working Group (RWG), local press discussed the burden of assistance to Iraqis, suggesting the U.S. and its allies should pick up the tab, but also supporting the King's decision to allow all Iraqi children here access to public schools. Meanwhile Jordan's leadership is smarting over Iraqi Deputy FM Hmoud's public criticism. In a series of recent meetings, Embassy officers discussed with UNICEF, UNHCR and local NGOs the GOJ's implementation of its decision to enroll Iraqi schoolchildren and presented a list of priority schools for double-shifting to the Jordanian Ministry of Education (to be reported septel). UNHCR and UNICEF released a joint education appeal in country on July 31. DHS/USCIS concluded its July circuit ride having interviewed 869 Iraqis and conditionally approved 600 persons for resettlement. END SUMMARY.

Picking up the Iraqi Assistance Tab and Public Commentary

[2](#). (C) Subsequent to the July 26 RWG, Iraqi deputy FM Hmoud's reportedly commented to the Iraqi press that the meeting failed to achieve its objectives and turned from humanitarian concerns to bill paying demands. These remarks have ruffled a few Jordanian feathers and have further soured an already poor working relationship on this issue between the Jordanian and Iraqi governments.

[3](#). (U) The RWG provoked a variety of reactions in the Jordanian press. On July 30 Jordanian columnist Nermeed Murad praised King Abdullah's decision to allow Iraqi schoolchildren to enroll in Jordanian public schools. She articulated the long-term value of being hospitable hosts to Iraqi "guests" who will someday return to Iraq and be "the best neighbors we can have" and argued that these guests should be allowed to live in Jordan "in peace and dignity." In a July 31 editorial titled "Not fair, not alone" in the English-language Jordan Times, the author summarized the outcomes of the July 26 RWG and expressed his view that "Jordan cannot be made to bear the cost of a failed policy in Iraq." He also wrote that the U.S. and its allies should provide sufficient assistance to ensure that Jordan can maintain its current level of support for Iraqis and argued that responsibility for the exodus of millions of Iraqis lies with the U.S. and the international community.

Education

¶4. (U) UNHCR and UNICEF launched their joint appeal for education assistance for Iraqis on July 31 in Amman at a briefing well-attended by local embassies. Imran Riza, UNCHR resident representative in Amman, and the acting UNICEF Director co-presented the \$129 million request, of which approximately \$40 million is slated for Jordan.

¶5. (SBU) The UNICEF emergency coordinator told Poloff that Prime Minister Bakhit convened a Cabinet-level meeting on August 5 wherein authority was granted to the Ministry of Education to begin enrolling Iraqi children. Ministry of Education Secretary General Tayseer An-Nahar told the UNICEF emergency coordinator on July 30 that the MoE will establish and chair the steering committee (ref c).

¶6. (SBU) Embassy officers met with staff from Save the Children, UNHCR, and UNICEF on August 1 and 5 to review options for double-shifting in Jordanian public schools. This working group continues to refine the list of priority schools identified by USAID's school-mapping project. They proposed this list during an August 6 meeting with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Planning (to be reported septel). The group agreed in principle that: double-shifted schools should be first in line to receive a school extension; UNHCR will cover the costs of double-shifting; and USAID assistance may be tapped for additional school extensions and construction in the medium-term.

USRAP Admission Summary

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¶7. (SBU) A DHS/USCIS team of six officers wrapped up its circuit ride on July 31. During their five weeks in Jordan, they interviewed 869 Iraqis and reached a decision on 772 persons. They conditionally approved 600 people (78% of the adjudications) and an additional 97 cases are still pending decisions. In the team's outbriefing, they complemented the quality of Embassy and UNHCR referrals and IOM's preparation of the case files. They also told Emboffs and TDY Refcoord that interviews with Iraqis are taking longer than expected due to some Iraqis inability to explicitly identify the source of their fear of persecution and that interviewers are adopting new probing techniques to handle these issues. The DHS team also noted a higher percentage than expected of cases in which material support was provided to a terrorist organization, primarily in kidnapping cases where the family paid a ransom. NOTE: At least some of the cases placed on hold for material support may be eligible for a waiver. END NOTE.

All Quiet on the Eastern Frontier

¶8. (C) Embassy Amman's Civil Affairs Liaison Team (CALT) visited the Karameh-Trebil border on August 1 and witnessed very few Iraqis crossing into Jordan. They estimate that only one or two Iraqis are granted entrance each day out of the perhaps ten which appear at the crossing. CALT reports that the Jordanian GID Colonel who manages border operations at Karameh strictly controls entry and that communication between Jordanian and Iraqi border officials is sparse in the absence of USG presence. NOTE: Iraqis continue to fly into Queen Alia International Airport; while many are detained and some denied entry (no statistics are available), many others do succeed in entering. END NOTE.

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